



Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Board of Health



September 2, 2009

PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

As kids head back to school and fall approaches, we are gearing up for what likely will be a complicated dual flu season with seasonal and H1N1 influenza circulating in our community. While we don't know exactly what the pandemic will bring locally, government scenarios show that as many as 50% of our population will be symptomatic and 30% will require medical care.

As a healthcare provider, you are a valuable partner in protecting the health and safety of our community. As such, we hope you will work with us to prevent the spread of H1N1 and seasonal influenza by:

- Encouraging your patients, co-workers, family and friends to get a seasonal flu vaccine as soon as it is available.
- Promoting common sense measures to prevent illness:
 - Stay home from work and school if ill until at least 24 hours after fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications.
 - Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol based sanitizer (if hands are not visibly soiled).
 - Practice respiratory etiquette: cover cough and sneezes with sleeve or tissue, throw the tissue away, and wash hands immediately.
- Looking and listening for information about the H1N1 influenza vaccine when it becomes available for targeted groups:
 - Pregnant women
 - Household contacts and caregivers of children less than 6 months of age
 - Healthcare workers and emergency medical services personnel
 - All people from 6 months through 24 years of age
 - People from 25 through 64 years of age who have conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.
- Registering to dispense the pandemic influenza H1N1 vaccine at <http://H1N1vaccine.odh.ohio.gov>.

Additionally, as we all prepare, we thought it would be helpful to share current CDC treatment and chemoprophylaxis recommendations.

- Treatment for influenza is recommended for:
 - All hospitalized patients with confirmed, probable or suspected pandemic influenza A H1N1, and;
 - Patients who are at higher risk for seasonal influenza complications.

- Chemoprophylaxis is recommended for:
 - Healthcare workers and first responders who have had recognized, unprotected close contact exposure to a confirmed, probable or suspected pandemic influenza A H1N1 case during the person's infectious period, and;
 - Close contacts of confirmed, probable or suspected pandemic influenza A H1N1 cases, who are at higher risk for seasonal influenza complications.

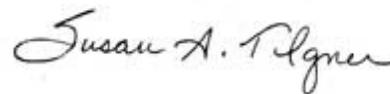
As you know, this situation is fluid and recommendations continue to evolve, so we will keep the Communicable Disease Reporting System (CDRS) website (www.cdrsinfo.com) updated to give you consistent and timely information. A Communicable Disease Nurse is also available to assist you with additional information or answers to your questions by calling 614-645-1474.

Thank you for partnering with to keep our community healthy and safe this flu season and year round.

Yours in good health,



Teresa C. Long, MD, MPH
Health Commissioner
Columbus Public Health



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References:

<http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/recommendations.htm>
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/HAN/070909.htm>